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BOOK DEPARTMENT

A full description of the books received, giving size, price, etc., will be found in the list of "Publications Received" in this issue, or, generally in a preceding issue of the SCHOOL REVIEW.

The Study of the Biology of Ferns, by the Collodion Method. For Advanced and Collegiate Students. By GEORGE F. ATKINSON, Ph. B., Associate Professor of Cryptogamic Botany in Cornell University. pp. xii+134. Macmillan & Co., 1894.

Professor Atkinson's book on the Biology of Ferns, since the first announcement that such a work was in progress, has been looked for with interest by botanists every where. Now that it has appeared it is certain to meet fully all expectations. As a book designed for the use of collegiate and advanced students, as is stated on the title page, it is in two respects unique. In the first place the fine drawings could not be faithfully reproduced except by the use of heavy paper of the best quality, and this the publishers have supplied. As a result we have a book which, of its kind, has probably no equal as regards typography, illustrations, and general workmanship. In the next place the copious illustrations, 163 in number, many of them elaborate, are all from original drawings made by the author especially for this work.

The book is divided into two parts, the first being devoted to a description of ferns in their various stages of development and growth. The author begins with the spore, the structure and germination of which are first considered. The development of the prothallium is then traced, and so on through all the successive stages until the fern plant, with its various organs, has been formed and the spore again produced. Nowhere do we find so clear an account of the life history of ferns as is here given, either as regards the verbal description or the illustrative figures. Nor is the book wanting in important additions to our knowledge of the group of plants to which it is devoted. Thus, for instance, a great deal has been added to what was previously known concerning the wonderful mechanism provided for the dispersal of spores.

In the second part we have presented the methods of study pursued by the author in his laboratory. Here an important feature of the work is termed the "Collodion method", in which the exceedingly delicate tissues of ferns are so prepared that sections for microscopic study may be made with scarcely any disturbance of the structure. The value of the method is shown in the excellent preparations from which all the drawings for the book were made. Indeed, a number of these preparations were made by

special students in the author's laboratory. This fact is of further significance as showing the splendid opportunities for advanced biological study here placed within the reach of students. The second part of the book, as a whole, constitutes a somewhat concise but excellent laboratory guide for the study of ferns, beginning with the material to be used, and explaining the successive steps until the finished preparation has been studied and figures drawn. An unusually full bibliography and an excellent index complete the work.

The author has been consistent with the title of his book, whereby no fault can be found with his use of the much misused term, "biology". It concerns only the biological aspects of ferns, no attention being given to systematic or taxonomic considerations. But the author does not fail to point out the importance of the group as a subject of study with reference to its relations to plants both higher and lower in the scale of development. Although the work is specialized and technical, as it sets out to be, it is nevertheless one which may be profitably studied by those who are mainly interested in ferns from a taxonomic standpoint, or regard them with favor on account of their beauty of form and appearance. Altogether the "Biology of Ferns" is a book fully abreast of the times, and embodies all that is best in modern biological study. It will of course find a place in the laboratories and libraries of all of our colleges and higher institutions of learning; but it also ought to be placed within the reach of such teachers in academies and high schools as are called upon to give instruction in botany for although they may not be able to follow all the book presents, their views of plants and of the methods of their study will surely be broadened and the value of their instruction thereby increased.

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An Introduction to the Study of Society. By ALBION N. SMALL, Ph. D., Head Professor of Sociology in the University of Chicago and GEORGE E. VINCENT, Vice Chancellor of the Chautauqua System of Education. New York, Cincinnati, Chicago: American Book Company. pp. 384.

The above named work is based on the "system of Schäffle, the principles of which this manual seeks to place within reach of American students" (p. 18). It "covers only a small fraction of General Sociology. It might be described as a method of Contemporary Descriptive Sociology" (do.). Elsewhere (p. 62) Descriptive Sociology is defined as "the organization of all the positive knowledge of man and of society furnished by the sciences and sub-sciences now designated or included under the